

# Bitter Sweet

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April 1979

The Magazine of Maine's Hills & Lakes Region

Vol. 2, No. 6





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Dear Peter-

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Ayah. The other day I was out there in the shed when I got an awful whiff of something strange. I got a pokin' round 'mongest my garden tools when-ZAP! By golly. I was drenched head to foot an' just as blind as a bat. The odor was something awful an' left no question that it was a skunk. When he let drive with that stream he was deadly. Right between the eyes. I groped for anything for defense. I finally had a hol' of something an' started a swingin' right from the hip. I could hear things a crashin' an' a bangin' as I swung with all my might. Things were flyin' pretty fast. How I know? 'Cause things were bumpin' off my head. I decided right then I'd better put a stop to that critter. So I swung with all my might. K-THUD! I caught hol' somethin' pretty good. Then I felt this sharp pain right on my cheek. Just like bear teeth had set right in. I took one more wicked swing at that critter. G-R-RASH!!! My cheek was pretty numb 'bout now an' I could feel a slight breeze. Pretty soon my eyes stopped a waterin'. My gosh I said, when I could see. There was one side of the shed completely out, my hoe, rake, shovels, seeder, garbage cans, forks, waterin' cans, prunin' shears, everything busted - an' no skunk 'round. But there was Betsey - that's maw you know. There she laid, right out cold, colder than a flounder, an' her false teeth was a missin'. I promptly reached up to my cheek an' pulled. Right there in my hand was Betsey's teeth. - Bert.

Dear Bert-

Best you buy a gas mask for future use. We have plenty of hoes, rakes, shovels, garbage cans, forks, watering cans, pruning shears, to replace you losses. We have knives which you may need to whittle a new set of teeth for maw. Come on over early before the rush starts. Plenty of seeds are in and all garden needs - Peter.



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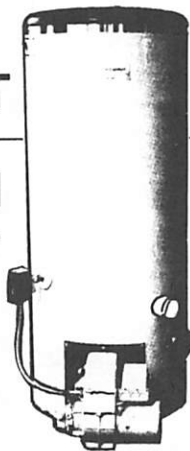
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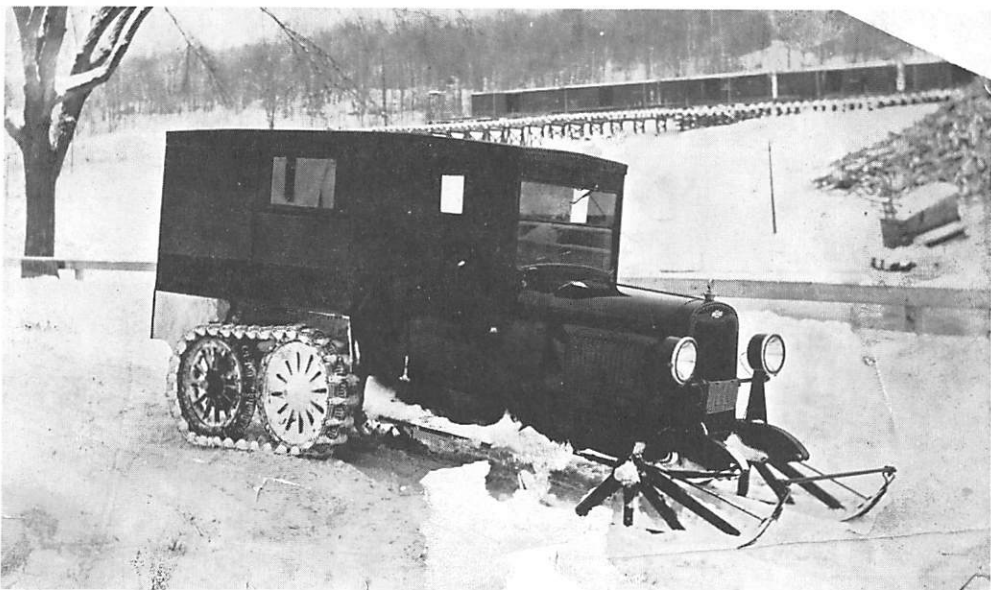
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Joy Miller and Leon Hanscom, both of Casco, and Ethel Meserve of Norway identified last month's *Can You Place It?* as a shot of Casco Village, looking toward Leach Hill.

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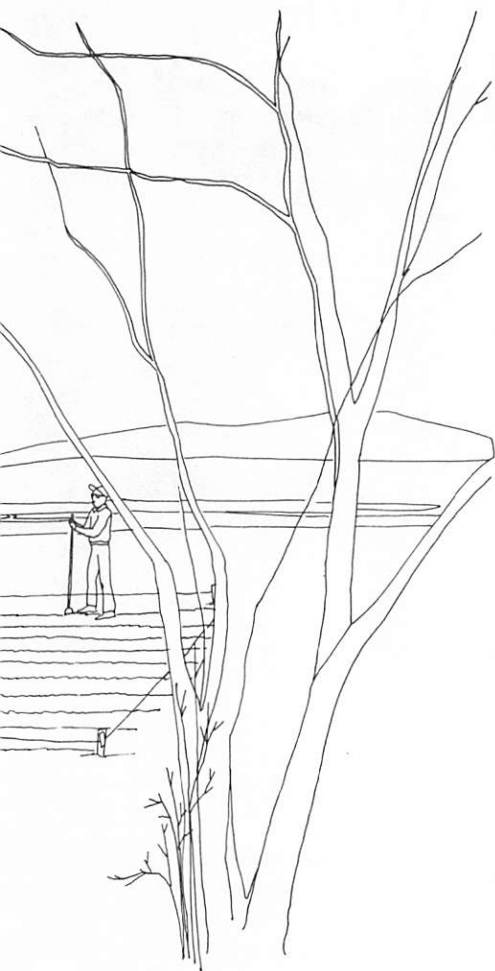
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## SPRING

This is the season  
of bicycles  
freed  
and sheets on the line  
spirits in the wind  
waving wildly against  
the sky forgetting for awhile  
that they'll soon be  
taken in.

*Dana Lowell  
Buckfield*

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# BitterSweet

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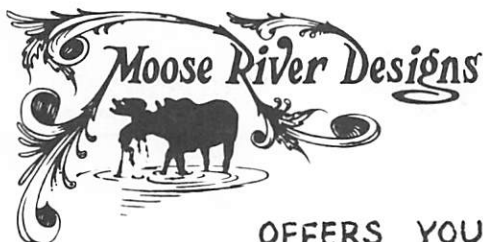
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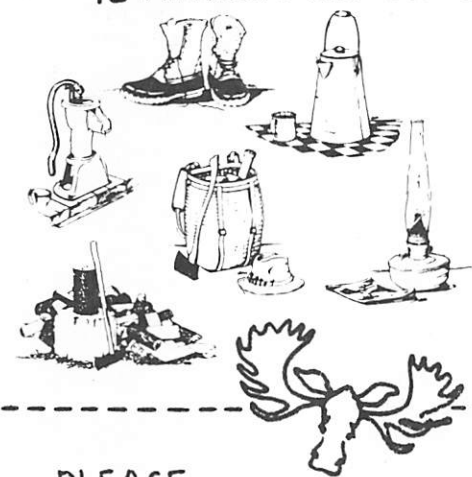
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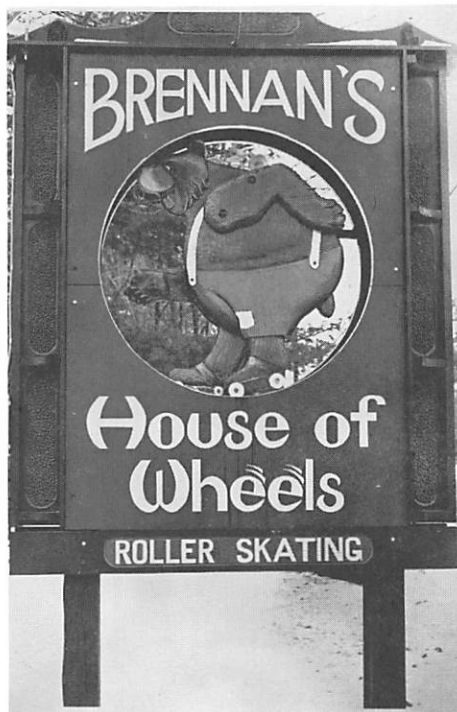


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# Maine Is Forever

by Inez Farrington

A seasonal account of rural life during the first fifty years of this century (Part Four)

April is a dull month, seeming unable to make up its mind as to being either season. Of course, April showers are a part of New England weather and we do not expect very much of the month in the way of real warmth. The nights are still cold and there



usually are spots of snow to be found until the last of the month. It is the month when we really settle down to house cleaning, get storm doors and windows off and the yard cleaned up. It is surprising what will be raked up in a yard along with last year's dead leaves: the towel that blew off the clothesline in the winter, which you had not missed; the missing rubber that had to be replaced by a new pair; the baby's rubber doll that the dog had carried away, mistaking it for a bone. They all go their way to the bonfire burning at the edge of the lawn and soon the new grass pushes its way through the damp soil. The daffodil and crocus join the slowly growing spring parade which is forming just around the corner.

If there is a disagreeable month in Maine, April might as well be given first place, but when all the everyday happenings are added up, the month is not found lacking in pleasure. The first spring sport gets under way and it is an exciting one not known in all states—that of dipping smelts. Smelts are such tiny fish that by the time they are caught, cleaned, and cooked, one wonders if it was all worth while; but, like deer hunting, men will go after these fish in spite of hell, high water, or game wardens. Most of the fun and excitement of this sport lies in the fact that they are so difficult to get. Most brooks where smelts run are far back from the main road, so a car has to be left and the journey made on foot over rough, muddy roads.

When we were young we lived near a

brook where there were plenty of smelts and Dad would take Mother, my sister and me with him. There were no cars then to bring in outsiders from miles away so it was a friendly crowd of neighbors who gathered each night at the brook. It was a quiet, respectable place for a man to take his wife and daughters, without the rough, noisy crowds of strangers that are there now. Smelts begin to run when the ice breaks up around the mouth of the brook and when the frogs begin to peep. I think the expression "run" is used because the smelts have to run from the fishermen and the men from the game wardens! The temptation is strong to dip just a few more after you have your limit allowed by law. This is not from any urge to break a law, but because once you have found these elusive fish, it takes a strong will to go away and leave them for the other fellow. This is a sport that requires silence and patience...Fishermen with a net, pail, and flashlight appear at the brook before dark, in order that each one can find, in his opinion, the best place to dip.

Once in a great while the fish will do the unexpected and run early in the evening, but they seem to like to keep the watchers waiting and usually put off the run until twelve or one o'clock. In the meantime, the men sit around and smoke and tell stories in whispers, not because the stories are the kind requiring a whisper, but because the fish will not come up if it is noisy. The silence is broken only by a light splash of a larger fish, the croak of a frog, and the hoot of an

a noisy drunk in the brook to quiet his spirits down a bit. In the days when the silly craze of swallowing live goldfish swept through schools of the country, Maine fishermen could hold their own with the students as they dared each other to swallow a live smelt. Which goes to prove that the state keeps up with the rest of the world, but in its own novel manner.

Suddenly the word is whispered around the brook "Here they come," and men forget that they are gentlemen and now it is each one for himself. Some who were lucky enough to get the best places soon have their two quart limit; but game wardens are right on their job, looking in each pail, so the fishermen might as well go home or go in search of another brook where there may be no wardens. Each one will cheat a little if he can get away with it, and yet no one finds fault with the Fish and Game Association and wardens. If it were not for them, one of Maine's best sports would soon be ruined.

Like beano, smelting is a game of chance. On an average there are three men to each smelt and three game wardens to each man. It is a game of patience too—trying to get these slippery fish in a net, one or two at a time. It means standing in icy water for hours with hip boots on, or taking the chance of going ashore to warm up and losing your dipping place.

Once the smelter gets his fish home his duty is usually done. Then his wife leaves off her house cleaning and puts in the day cleaning fish. It is a slow job to clean them,

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**Smelts begin to run when the ice breaks up around the mouth of the brook and when the frogs begin to peep. I think the expression "run" is used because the smelts have to run from the fishermen and the men from the game wardens!**

---

owl in the distance. The flashlights are used very sparingly, for the smelts dislike a light as well as noise, but one of the party is selected as delegate to peer in the brook occasionally to see if the fish are coming up.

No smelting party is complete until someone who has had too strong liquid refreshment falls in the brook. This holds up the whole business while the rest help him out, and frightens the smelts away for at least an hour, but it always happens and only adds pleasure to the sport. Men who take their sports seriously will not hesitate to toss

for their heads must be cut off with shears and each fish squeezed separately. Then they must be washed in several waters. It is one of the messiest tasks I know, but when the little fish are rolled in corn meal and fried to a golden brown in hot fat, you have a real Maine meal.

Just when the last smelt has been dipped or returned to the ponds and lakes, the suckers start to run. If anyone is wondering what that expression means, he is someone who has never lived in Maine. This sport is as exciting as smelting and pays off better,





Photo by Tom Stockwell

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# BitterSweet



because not many people care to eat these very bony fish. The smelt brook is now called the sucker brook and it is a more lively place, for these fish do not object to noise and company. Dad was always willing for us to go with him when he went after suckers, and it was something to look forward to at that time. The fishing equipment consisted (and still does) of bran sacks, spears, and torches. When a group of men in town were ready to go suckering they resembled a band of head-hunters. In the days before flashlights, the torches were made by wrapping old sacks around a pole and then dipping them in kerosene. These torches gave a good light and would last a long time. The brook with its dancing lights, the shouts and yells of laughter, and the men with their long spears, must have produced an effect like the dance of the Islanders; but to us it was an exciting event that only came once a year and we gave no thought to strange customs, cold wet feet, and colds in our heads the next day. The sport has now gone the way of many old-time things and very few people go suckering. However, it is a sport that offers plenty of action, one that is a little different from the ordinary, and one that will always be here in Maine for those who care to try it. It was not unusual, in the days when I went suckering with Dad, for one man to capture a bran sack full, and now it would be easy to double the amount.

Maine housewives disliked to see anything go to waste, so an attempt was always made to eat the fish. Grandmother cooked them slowly in a bean pot and claimed there was no danger from the bones then, as they would crumble; but there was no way to overcome the muddy taste they always had. Personally, I never dared risk eating them. Anything as full of bones as a sucker is well protected by nature and it seems like tempting Providence to try to swallow them.

Maine lakes and ponds are usually free of ice sometime in April, although it may linger on into May. Contrary to many people's ideas, the ice does not go out—it breaks up and goes under. It begins to turn dark in March and by April looks "rotten" to use our Maine expression. It breaks up in large cakes which grow smaller each day, and then a heavy wind will clear the lake. It is a happy day when we see the blue waters of our lakes sparkle in the sun again. It gives us the feeling that we are free of winter's chains, that the last link has broken.

I believe it was our summer guests who started the idea of giving prizes to the one who guesses the correct date of the ice going "out." Small bets were always exchanged among the natives but now the prizes make it worth while to gamble on. Each lake has its own prizes and anyone can enter in all the contests simply by giving his guess as to the day, hour, and minute. Contests close two weeks before the usual expected date so this is not easy to guess. I have guessed the correct day several times but never reached the finals. Judges of the contests are game wardens who watch the lakes day and night and their decision is final. I often wonder what their thoughts are as they shiver on the shore, waiting for the last small ice cake to disappear. My guess is that they want to get



home to supper and are thinking, "My feet are cold and to heck with these contests!"

Each year when Keewaydin Lake is free of ice the old story is told again to the youngsters of the counterfeit money machine that lies at the bottom of the lake. Years ago when money was scarce and wages small, a couple of prominent men invented a machine that made fifty-cent pieces. Business was good until the law took over. Some way the secret leaked out that the sheriff was hunting these men. When the story reached them, they sank the machine in the lake and when the sheriff arrived, they were sitting on the front porch looking like any innocent citizens. There being no evidence, the law went home defeated. When the new dam was built at the mouth of Keewaydin and the water in the lake was very low, the story was revived again and some even thought of dragging

the lake in order to get the machine just to see what it looked like. But nothing came of the idea and it lies there still, rusty and probably broken, but maybe with even a few half-dollars in it that never were circulated in a trusting place.

The old folks also tell the story of the island in the lake that disappeared suddenly. One day it was there, a good-sized island with rocks and trees on it, and the next morning it was gone, never to be seen again. The fact that this lake is a small one and that the water at this place was shallow made the mystery one that was never explained. Today the Bartlett Island Camp is near this place and the descendants of the Bartletts, who helped settle the town, swim and romp throughout the summer, with no thought that their island may go the way of that mysterious one long ago.

Looking through old diaries in search of something interesting to write about April, it occurs to me that it would seem like a dull life to some, but each day has records that meant much at the time. "Frogs are peeping" means that once again the brooks and rivers are clear of ice and the cheerful chorus of hundreds of peepers can be heard each night as we drop off to sleep. "Saw a robin" means that it is an early spring, that we can be quite sure that spring is really here. "Went to Old Orchard" does not mean anything in July except that thousands of others did the same thing—swam in the cool sea, ate hot dogs, rode the roller coaster, and took a nap on the white sands—but in April it means something altogether different. It means being able to park the car directly on the waterfront, roll up all the windows to prevent the chill winds from creeping in, and watch a sea that is as different as April itself is from July. All the amusements are closed, the booths on the pier are tightly boarded against the heavy winter storms. The beach that is kept tidy in summer is littered with debris washed in with the tide. Summer guests would hardly recognize it as the playground of a nation that they see in July and August, but this is the time to meet the native population. Through the summer rush of work they tend strictly to business, but during April you will find them friendly and ready to stop for a chat.

The large restaurants are closed but the little ones are serving as delicious food to the inhabitants and occasional guest as they do to the summer trade. It is an experience to

remember to eat supper in the early twilight, looking out at a cold rough sea which in a few weeks will echo the sound of thousands of voices, the music of the merry-go-round, the whistle of the traffic officers, and the roar of cars. Now the beach is deserted in the swiftly growing dusk except for a collie pup hurrying home and a lonely gull searching for food. Many people have the idea that a visit to Old Orchard Beach should be made only through July and August, but those who look for new experiences will be well repaid if they manage to see it as it is in April.

The frogs and peepers are now in splendid voice and any orchestra or band leader would do well to listen to their way of harmonizing their music. One wonders in the silent evening just what signal is given to start hundreds of peepers all at once—hundreds of frogs all in the same key, their shrill chorus filling the night. Suddenly, as if at the drop of a conductor's baton, the clamor stops and silence settles over the bog. Who can say what power is given these small frogs to achieve a perfection humans strive for in order that people may listen to music? This is the music that nature and God gave April, to brighten up an otherwise drab month.

April is not only a dull month for activities and weather, it has no holiday of importance to anyone except our own family. It is the month of Dad's birthday and while he is not an important man to the nation, he certainly is to those who know him well. Dad is a typical old-timer of Maine: he was born here and has lived here all his life. He is a treat to summer guests, who invite him and Mother to an evening meal and then get him started on his famous story telling. Dad is not one who hesitates to stretch the truth if it will make a better story. Honest as the day is long and never known to tell a lie if it would do harm to anyone, he does not consider his stories as anything but the solid truth. Loved by all who know him, Dad goes on telling stories for his supper which are accepted all in fun. Summer people never tire of them and will ask "Is it really true, Elmer?" He will assure them that it is and that such things really happened when he was young. Dad could have run a close race with Newton Newkirk who had a summer camp nearby at the time when he was famous for tall stories. All Maine folks will stretch a point when telling a story to out-of-state visitors. They

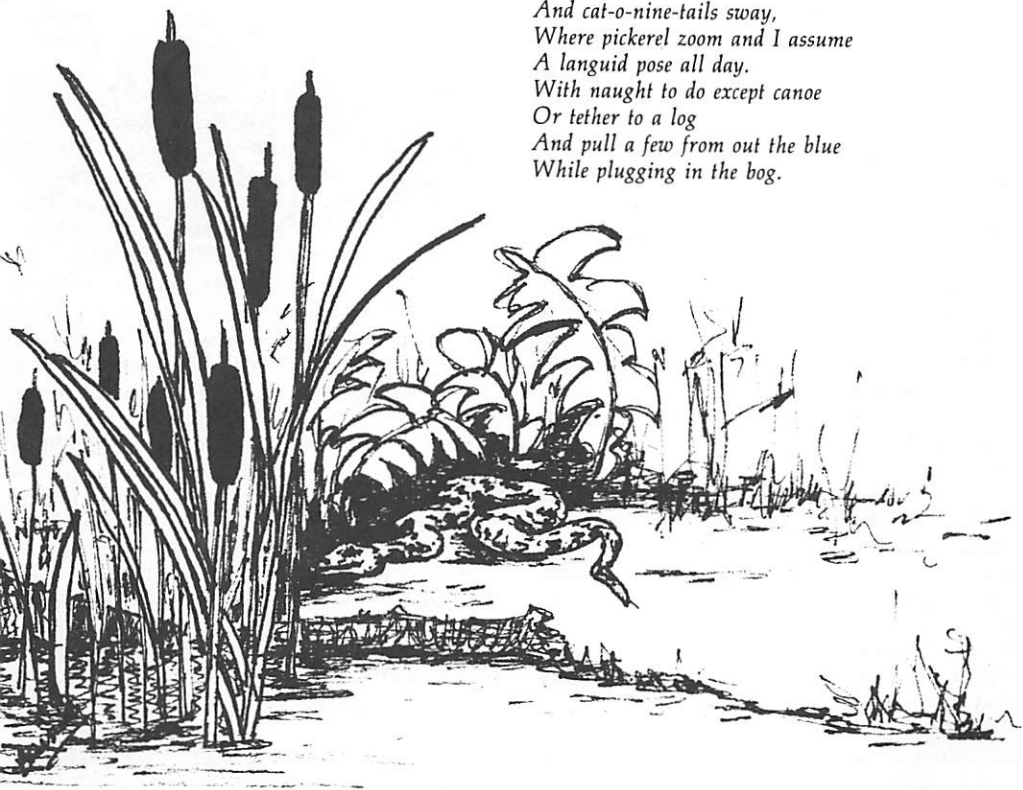


# Heading Out

## Bog Fishing

by Stanley Foss Bartlett

Some Izaaks stroll from hole to hole  
Along the babbling brooks  
With creel and pole and rigamarole  
From rubber boots to hooks  
While others choose to park their shoes  
In motor-boats or such  
With guides and crews, and maybe booze,  
And troll to be the Dutch.  
If that's their way it is OK  
But I prefer to plug  
In bogs where lay the trout, and play  
The turtles, frogs and bugs  
Where lilies bloom and herons boom  
And cat-o-nine-tails sway,  
Where pickerel zoom and I assume  
A languid pose all day.  
With naught to do except canoe  
Or tether to a log  
And pull a few from out the blue  
While plugging in the bog.



They're on the march again—these happy individuals who make up that democratic army of fishermen that is spreading over land and sea at this season. Presidents angle from the decks of luxurious yachts in tropical waters and farmer-boys dangle their crooked alder poles over their favorite holes in countryside creeks. Personally, we enjoy fishing anywhere anytime anyhow, especially if the fish are biting, but prosaic bog fishing is our specialty.

Almost every Maine pond has a generous area of bog at its inlet or outlet where the water is from a foot to five or six feet deep in the archipelagos of cat-o-nine-tail hummocks. As a lad, we lived near one of these marshes and we roughly estimate that at least half of our boyhood was spent in an old canoe exploring the labyrinth that supported more wild life to the acre than a tropical jungle.

Our first discovery in the so-called bog was that big brook trout gathered there in the spring, and on the pretense of fishing we spent many hours neighboring with the birds, beasts, reptiles, and fish thereabouts. Deer came in there in the dim hours to stand knee-deep in the water and munch lily-pod roots and the place was a paradise for muskrats. The rats had well-worn tunnels through the lower vegetation of hummocks and they built their abodes by plastering the tops of hollow stumps with a cement-like mixture of mud and grass. Almost any moonlit night their dark heads could be seen rippling the calm surface of the water as they swam to and fro about their small business.

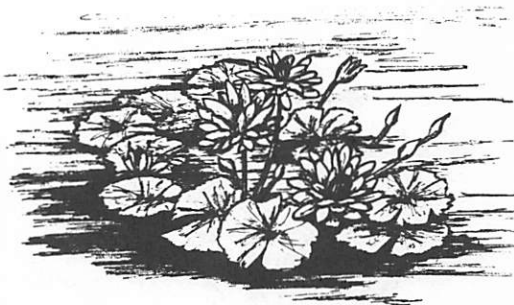
Once, a nomadic tribe of beaver moved into the bog and remained about two years. They slashed down several poplar trees on the nearby mainland, dug a canal several feet in length to facilitate transportation of their logs, and erected three dome-like huts on one of the larger hummocks. These hits had subterranean or rather submarine entrances which permitted the occupants to reach their food supply under the frozen surface of the pond during the winter months without exposing themselves to the snow or wintry blast.

Bird life was abundant in the bog; but the great blue herons, mudhens, black ducks, red-winged blackbirds, and sandpipers made up the majority of the feathered population. The herons, standing about four feet tall, made daily trips to the bog for meals from their crude nests in the tree tops about a mile

distant. Like great sea planes they would slide down the sky into the shallow water and still hunt for frogs and fish. Striking like lightning with their powerful beaks they would impale a fish, toss it in the air, and swallow it head-first to prevent injury to their throats by the needle fins.

In those days the gulping song of the mudhen, alias bittern, alias stake-driver, was music to our boyish ears, for these awkward birds were so confident of their protective coloring and ability to remain motionless that one could approach very close to them before they would take off with a final gulp and much splashing. Incidentally, these birds have a mighty nasty habit of vomiting while in flight when disturbed.

One pair of black ducks returned to the bog year after year, building a large nest of leaves, moss, and down on the ground and raising a small flotilla of ducklings that followed mother about the protective waters of the bog, diving and quacking contentedly.



The red-winged blackbirds added considerable noise to the bog, the males arriving first from the south and staging a stag party in their black uniforms with red and yellow epaulets. Perched precariously on dried cat-o-nine-tail stalks, they shouted "chug-a-lee" to one another and awaited the arrival of a flock of brown females; then the chosen husbands and wives settled seriously down to homelife. To their credit may it be said that the red-winged blackbird males are faithful to their spouses. Their nests, constructed of dried cat-o-nine-tail leaves and rootlets, are usually lashed between two stalks on a hummock and the eggs deposited in it are blue-green carelessly splashed with black splotches. No local bird raises a greater rumpus or is more defiant than this species when its nest is approached by a human being.

The sandpipers were a merry lot usually

roaming about in pairs, skimming along over the water and teetering drunkenly on sand and log, jerking and peeping nervously and uneasily. Their song, however, is as harmonious as that of the lark in the spring.

Despite natural enemies there was no shortage of peeping frogs in the bog as anyone living in the vicinity will testify, for of a summer evening their melodious voices, accompanied by the bassos of bull-paddys, arose from the dank gloom in a chorus that echoed through the hills. These peepers are not, as many folks suppose, just young bull frogs; they are a species in themselves, called hyla by those who have retained some of their Latin. These reptiles are scarcely an inch long and swell their throats to about the normal size of their body as they utter monosyllabic song.

Mud-turtles, the common painted and snapping, were among the first to greet spring in the bog. They lost no time in getting onto the mainland sand and depositing great numbers of eggs in the sand—these eggs being white and with shells that felt like fine sandpaper.

The painted turtle's eggs are shaped like capsules, while the snapping turtle's are spherical. We once carried a pocketful of these eggs home and buried them in the kitchen in a sand box. A few days later, much to the surprise of our mother, 27 snapping turtles about the size of a half-dollar, ambled out onto the kitchen floor and instinctively headed for the side of the room nearest the pond. When placed out-of-doors, they immediately headed for the pond shore several hundred feet distant.

There were snakes in the bog, too, but personally we didn't harbor the horror of these reptiles that many folks do, for the local species are harmless, though a minute green snake once bit our hand with all the viciousness of a python, inflicting an

bog was alive with the larvae of dragon-flies that attached themselves grotesquely to leaf and twig. The birth of a dragon-fly is well worth witnessing. The brown, dead-appearing larva cracks across the back and the damp, half-awake body emerges. A few minutes in the sunlight and breeze and its limp wings become stiffer and its body throbs with active life. The newborn insect tries its legs and its wings and soon it is away like a tiny plane, darting here and there over land and water, far away from the empty, fragile shell from which it emerged, and which still clings with hollow lifeless legs to the object where it crawled and attached itself a short time before.

Few people would think of visiting a bog to gather flowers, but beautiful blooms may be found there nevertheless. Among the spears and blades of cat-tails, swamp roses bloom galore. And rising from the deep damp there is the blue flag moss, the delicate blue-eyed grass, the skunk-cabbage, the jack-in-the-pulpit and the exotic pitcher plant—the last two of which gather considerable nourishment from luckless insects that enter their pulpits and pitchers, never to emerge. Tiny sun-dew plants cling to driftwood logs; swamp laurel brightens the scene with its deep pink flowers and, later in the season, red cranberries hang appetizingly from their slender stems.

Of course, pickerel weed and arrowhead grow rankly in these bogs, while yellow cow-lilies and white pond-lilies spread their pads over great acres of water between the hummock islands. Acres of snowy fragrant pond-lilies even draw prosaic bog-fishermen who lure the lowly hornpout in these waters.

While the foregoing may seem somewhat aside from the subject of fishing, it is all closely allied with the noble sport. Confidentially, mighty few fishermen go fishing merely for the fish they catch; most of them honestly enjoy the close association with all nature, whether it be along a mountain or meadow stream, about a gleaming pond, or in a humble bog that is a world in itself.

□



almost invisible wound.

Also in the spring, the vegetation of the

*Bartlett was a popular local journalist, photographer and author who wrote during the 1920's and 30's for, among others, The Lewiston Evening Journal.*

# Folk Tales

## SWEDEN'S BILL SHAPPELL: INVENTOR-CRAFTSMAN

by Jerry Genesio



*Bill Shappell: "If you can draw it, I can make it."*

If someone collects a pile of junk and stacks it in a heap, he has a heap of junk and could be called a junkman.

If someone collects a pile of junk and randomly hooks it all together, he may have a modern art sculpture and could be called an artist.

But if someone collects a pile of junk and very selectively welds, bolts, greases, and oils it, and then is lucky enough to plug it in and discover it works as originally intended, he could have come up with a new-fangled machine and may be called an inventor. Now, if this inventor takes his new-fangled machine and, through further ingenuity and skill, produces something that is marketable, he could be called an inventor-craftsman. Bill Shappell of Sweden, Maine is just that.

Last spring, after four disillusioning years as a general contractor in the trucking business, Bill decided it was time for a change. One day, while considering the dismal prospect of returning to hireling status, he dejectedly strolled about his property. Providence sat him down by a pile of junk he'd accumulated over the years and, for lack of something better to do, Bill picked up an old, chipped, candle-pin bowling ball, a remnant of his days as manager of the Pondicherry Lanes bowling alleys in Bridgton. As he was tossing the ball from

hand to hand, his eyes rested on a metal bar atop the pile. He mentally bent both ends of the bar around the bowling ball, then visualized a larger radius in the center of the bar. Through imagination he produced its double, welded the two together and SHAZAM! He had conjured up a firewood holder, utilizing the junk which only moments before had lain useless.

It seemed like a good idea in theory. He decided to try it. Placing the bowling ball and one end of the bar between the jaws of a large vise, he manually pushed the bar forward and curved it in a perfect circle, in the process changing not only the shape of the bar but the direction of his life as well.

Pine Tree Enterprises was born. Formerly a contracting business owned and operated by one William C. Shappell, the business today is a blacksmith shop producing all sorts of fireplace and woodstove accessories. Behind Bill's house on Sweden's Route 93, a quarter of a mile from the Bridgton town line, stands the shop—two 10 by 13 foot abandoned cabins moved from a girls' summer camp in Lovell and joined, front to rear. Above, where the roofs of the two units failed to come perfectly together, Bill installed a 10-inch wide skylight using a thick, opaque, corrugated plastic material which had, like so many other useful things



which have fallen into Bill's hands, been junked by someone as useless. Within the shop stands an oil pot burner, blasting heat and enabling Bill to work through the long, cold winter nights.

Behind the shop rests one of Bill's most useful resources, a non-junk pile. In addition to his manual, four-inch radius Bowling Ball Bar Bender invention, the pile has more recently provided the parts for a slightly larger Ball Bearing Bar Bender made from a truck spring leaf, bolts, and two truck bearings. And it has provided him with his long, sturdy workbench made from a short section of two-inch diameter galvanized pipe and a battered bowling alley, a coal-fired forge made from the brake drum of a 1969 International truck, and his newest and most complicated invention to date—the Big Belted Bar Bender, an electrically-powered device which produces a radius from six inches to infinity. This latest contraption presented more of a challenge than Bill had banked on and he had to consult George Cooper of Bridgton, his former employer at Pondicherry Lanes and a mechanical engineer. Together they selected a variety of components from the now-diminishing parts pile and proceeded to invent the Big Belted Bar Bender. The power train is comprised of a one-half horsepower electric motor, a 15-to-1 ratio gear reducer and a set of 7½-to-1 ratio sprockets from a salvaged automatic bowling pin setter. The drive or feeder wheel is a five-inch diameter sprocket from a Caterpillar bulldozer idler assembly. The pressure points against which the desired radius is formed are two bearings from a non-junked Ford truck. And the frame is welded channel iron, a bit rusty but perfectly serviceable.

Occasionally Bill will resort to using more conventional tools such as grinders, drill press, vise, stick welder, anvil, and other, smaller, handheld instruments; but only if he can't readily think of a better way to accomplish the task at hand.

The Pine Tree Enterprises Blacksmith Shop suddenly began receiving orders of sufficient volume to force Bill into abandoning his all-but-depleted non-junk pile and purchasing raw stock on the open market. He uses a substantial quantity of bar and flat stock, all mild steel which he shapes, welds, and then paints with a heat-resistant, black iron finish.

The shop's product line has expanded to include several log holder models ranging from 20 inches to 4 feet in diameter, a fireplace or woodstove tool stand as uniquely designed as the shovel, poker, scraper and tongs which it holds, and fireplace gratings of assorted sizes and descriptions. Bill is quick to point out, however, that he'll make anything. "If you can draw it, I can make it," he claims. He expects to soon add several other items to his regular line, including black iron cooking pot holders, black iron plant hangers, triangular bar dinner bells, and possibly camping equipment such as campfire pot stands.

Bill Shappell, originally from Oxford, Maine, is 37. In 1970 he bought the old Flint Schoolhouse in Sweden where he has since lived alone. This year he was elected Co-chairman of the Sweden Planning Board. He does all of his own cooking, including baking bread. Obviously a strong believer in versatility, he often uses his forge as a barbecue. Bill says it will cook a nice, thick steak, which he prefers cooked rare and "very quickly."

*Genesio is a free-lance writer living in Sweden.*

---

## JEOPARDY

Unwary young rabbit,  
darting across the busy way,  
if you persist in this habit,  
you may not reach the other side.  
One tragic day  
you will be crushed  
at last  
to a grisly gory heap  
of flesh and bone and fur, brushed  
by turning wheels and provide  
food for carrion crows.  
No one will stop to weep  
as the traffic flows  
and the heedless ride  
past.

*Otta Louise Chase  
Sweden*

# Goings On

## THEATRE

**WINNERS:** a play by Brian Friel, presented by Profile Theatre at Gould Academy's Bingham Hall, Apr. 11, 7:30 p.m.

**GEORGES DANDIN:** by Moliere, May 18 & 19, 8:00 p.m., May 20, 2:00 p.m., Bates College Schaeffer Theatre. Admission: adults \$2.50, students \$1.25.

**JONAH & THE WHALE:** a special mime presentation by Family Workshops of five area churches: 1st Congregational, South Paris; 2nd Congregational, Norway; Trinity Lutheran, and Universalist Churches of Norway and South Paris. Directed by Tony Montanaro, Sun. April 1, Oxford Hills Junior High School, South Paris. Pot-luck supper preceding, 6 p.m.

**PIPPIN:** coming May 17th, presented by Hebron Academy.

## ART

**HARRIET MATTHEWS - SCULPTURE:** Mar. 11-Apr. 22; **DAVID FULLER - PHOTOGRAPHS,** Apr. 29 - June 4, Bates

College Treat Gallery, Lewiston. Gallery hrs: Fri. 1-4:30, 7-8 p.m., Sun. 2-5. Free Admission.

**ANCIENT IMAGES OF MEXICO & ANDES:** Tapestries by Nancy Hemenway of Boothbay Harbor and Washington, D.C. Handsewn collages of lambs' wool & alpaca, formerly shown at the Smithsonian Institute. Hebron Academy's Hupper Gallery Apr. 2-27. Gallery hrs: Weekdays 9-5, Sun. 2-5 p.m.

## MUSIC

**WORD OF MOUTH CHORUS:** Early American shape note music, First Congregational Church, So. Paris, Apr. 21, 7:30 p.m. Admission charge.

**WILD MOUNTAIN THYME:** Bluegrass, traditional, folk, contemporary & original music, Gould Academy's Bingham Hall, May 16, 7:30 p.m.

## ETC.

**COUNTRY DANCING:** Contra, square & circle dances, informal music, everyone learning together, South Paris Legion Hall, Apr. 28, 8 p.m.

**THE MINSTREL FOLLIES:** presented by



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the Forward Fellowship of the Universalist Church of West Paris, Apr. 20 & 21, 7:30 p.m., West Paris Gym.

**HEBRON ACADEMY'S 175th BIRTHDAY:** A fantastic spectacle with parade, hot-air balloon rides, athletic events & birthday cake, May 12, all day.

**ON-GOING SUPPORT GROUPS:** sponsored by Tri-County Mental Health in the Rumford & Norway areas, including

Separation/Divorce, Senior Citizens, Cancer Self-Help, Women's Support, and others. For more information, call 743-7911 (Norway), 364-7981 (Rumford), or 645-4979 (Wilton).

**SMALL WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOC. of MAINE:** a self-supported forest management group for small woodlot owners. Meeting approx. six times yearly. Contact them at 62 High Street, So. Paris, 743-6488.

## SPECIAL

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The Pine Tree Quilters' Guild's western Maine chapter—*Country Road Quilters*—is a newly-formed group of handcrafters who meet the second Tuesday of each month at

the Norway Savings Bank (next meeting will be April 10). According to Louise Huff, Regional Director, the twenty-plus members in the Norway-Paris-Waterford area also meet weekly in two separate groups: the *Pine Needles*, meeting every Thursday in South Paris; and the *East Waterford* group, which congregates every Monday from 1-3 at the Country Store there.

They welcome visitors. If you are a quilter who would like to join the state organization, just contact Mrs. Huff or one of the other officers: Viola Hazelton, Harrison; Joan Markey, East Waterford; or Janice Long, Norway.

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# You don't say

Old Father Hodge was an odd man, and in his own way made everything a subject of rejoicing.

His son came in one day and said, "Father, that old black sheep has got two lambs..."

"Good," said the old man, "that's the most profitable sheep we've got on the whole farm."

"But one of 'em's dead," returned Ben.

"I'm glad," said the father, "it'll be better for the other sheep."

"But t'other's dead, too."

"So much the better, she'll make a grand piece of mutton in the fall."

"Yes, but the old sheep is dead, too," cried Ben.

"Dead, dead! What? The old sheep's dead?" cried Hodge. "That's good, rot her, she was always an ugly old scamp."

*from an 1892 Scrapbook*



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# A Grower's Guide to Maine's Hills & Lakes Region



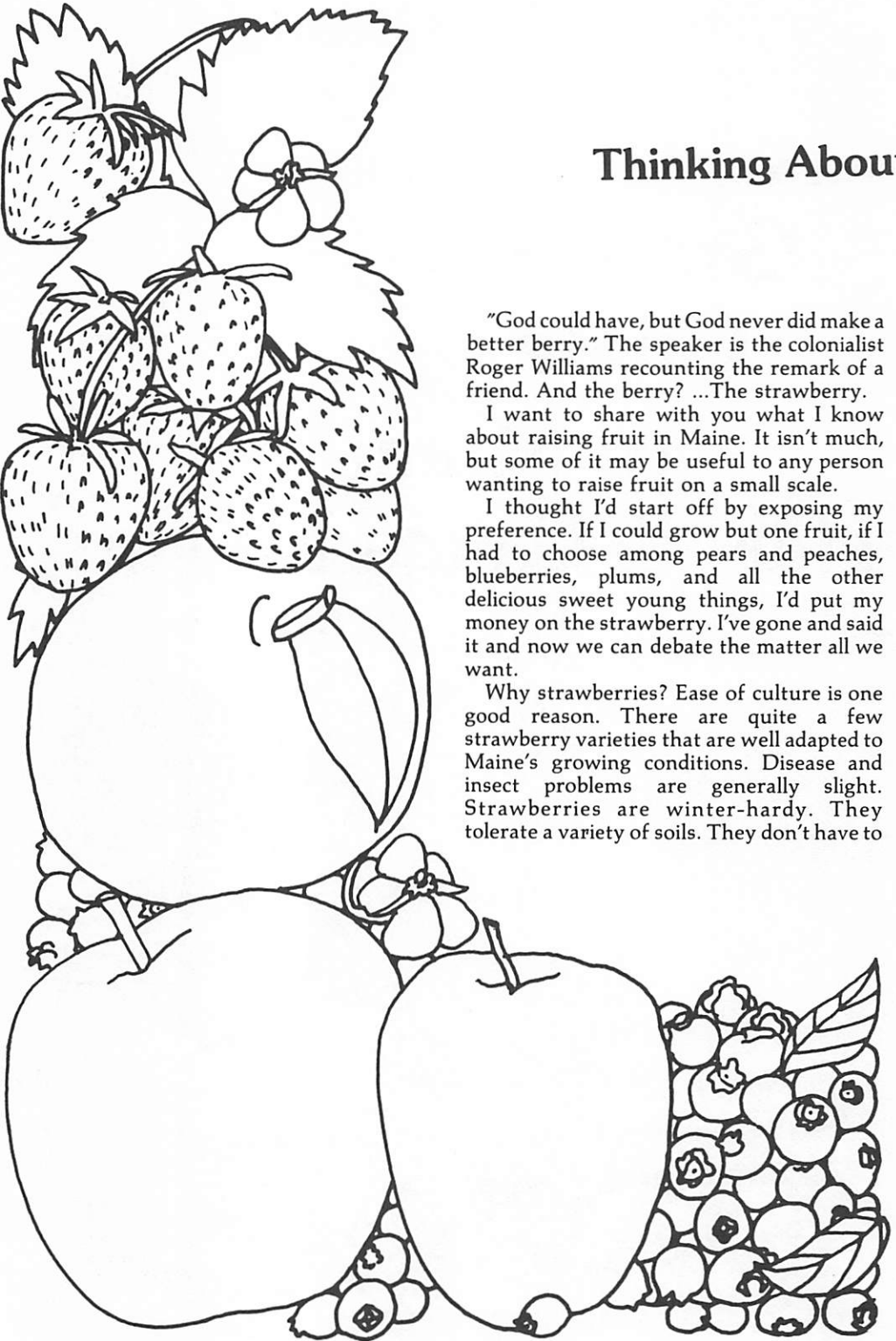
## Thinking About

"God could have, but God never did make a better berry." The speaker is the colonialist Roger Williams recounting the remark of a friend. And the berry? ...The strawberry.

I want to share with you what I know about raising fruit in Maine. It isn't much, but some of it may be useful to any person wanting to raise fruit on a small scale.

I thought I'd start off by exposing my preference. If I could grow but one fruit, if I had to choose among pears and peaches, blueberries, plums, and all the other delicious sweet young things, I'd put my money on the strawberry. I've gone and said it and now we can debate the matter all we want.

Why strawberries? Ease of culture is one good reason. There are quite a few strawberry varieties that are well adapted to Maine's growing conditions. Disease and insect problems are generally slight. Strawberries are winter-hardy. They tolerate a variety of soils. They don't have to



# Fruit Growing

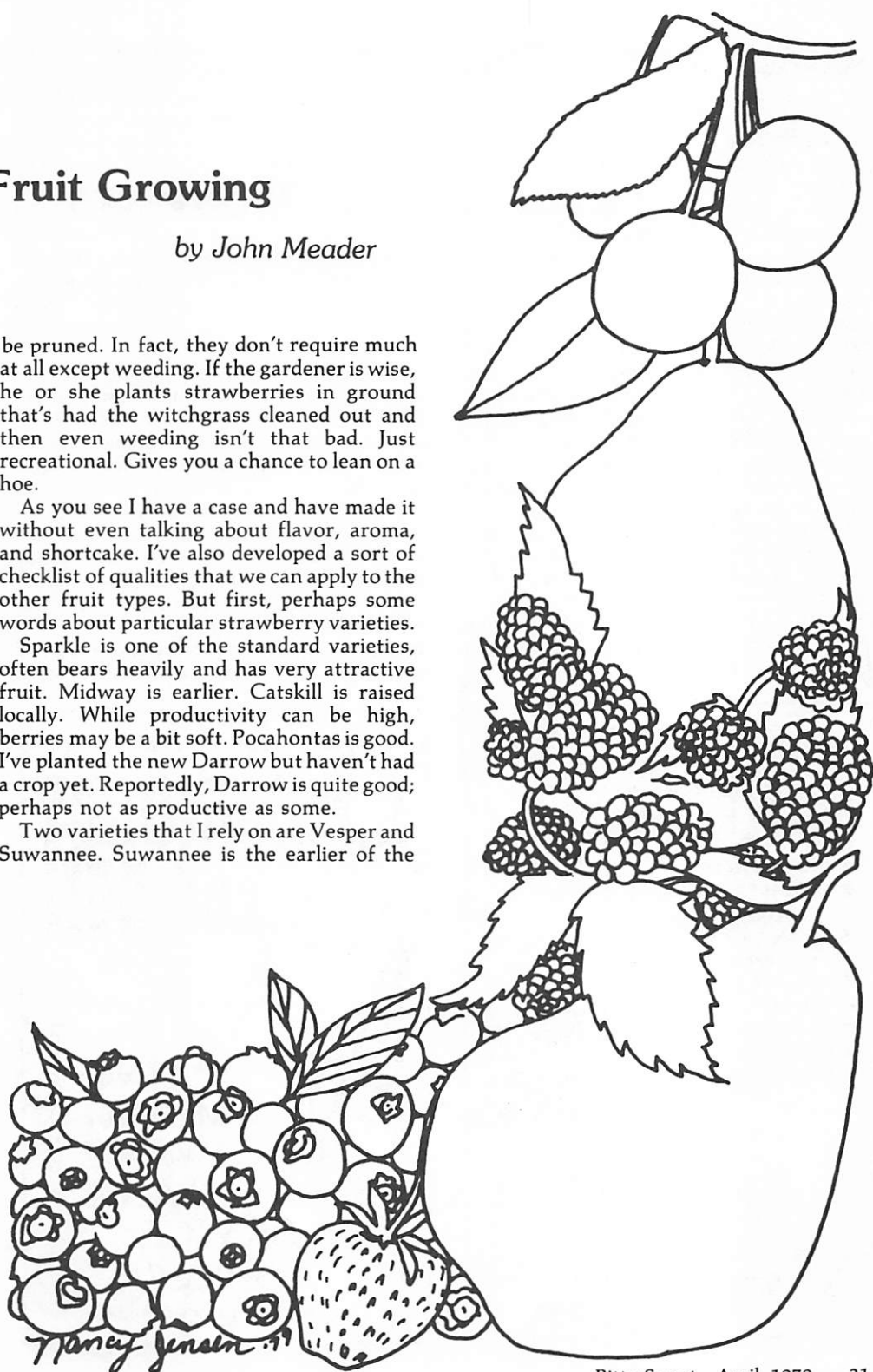
by John Meader

be pruned. In fact, they don't require much at all except weeding. If the gardener is wise, he or she plants strawberries in ground that's had the witchgrass cleaned out and then even weeding isn't that bad. Just recreational. Gives you a chance to lean on a hoe.

As you see I have a case and have made it without even talking about flavor, aroma, and shortcake. I've also developed a sort of checklist of qualities that we can apply to the other fruit types. But first, perhaps some words about particular strawberry varieties.

Sparkle is one of the standard varieties, often bears heavily and has very attractive fruit. Midway is earlier. Catskill is raised locally. While productivity can be high, berries may be a bit soft. Pocahontas is good. I've planted the new Darrow but haven't had a crop yet. Reportedly, Darrow is quite good; perhaps not as productive as some.

Two varieties that I rely on are Vesper and Suwannee. Suwannee is the earlier of the



two and I run some risk of having the flowers killed by a late frost, but the flavor of Suwannee is truly superior, probably the best of all. The fruit falls off in size and can get a little soft, but the plants are vigorous and show resistance to some diseases.

Vesper is one of the latest bearing varieties. Anyone gardening on low lands threatened by June frosts should consider Vesper for this, if no other, reason. But Vesper has other fine qualities. Flavor is excellent, the berry is large and dark red, the plants bear well. Vesper does have flaws—all varieties do; it's susceptible to leaf disease and a bit stingy as a runner-maker, at least for me. Some people object to the seeds, which are somewhat large. The plant lies quite low and the fruit accordingly are often rather exposed—makes for easier picking, but the robins find the fruit easier too. A mixed blessing.

What about the ever-bearers? What about the strawberries you see on the backs of newspaper supplements that engulf whole telephone poles with vines that sag with fruit the size of doorknobs? Well, think twice, my friend. Ever-bearers are all right, though none to my mind compares to the

spring-bearing types. But if you're bothered by tarnished plant bugs you may never get fruit worth eating. The tarnished plant bug will suck on the blossoms and forming fruit and leave you a seedy nub not quite as large as that doorknob, but about as edible. Enough said. Let's talk about other fruit.

A close second to strawberries for ease of culture and adaptation to Maine would be the raspberry. Not all varieties are hardy and there can be disease and insect problems, but a bit of care in choosing varieties and in growing them can make raspberries a valuable addition to the garden.


As for disease problems, raspberries are prone to several viruses and it's important to buy virus-free plants if possible. Some varieties are virus-tolerant, Latham among them, but these may not be the best for local growing.

Insects? Aphids will infest the leaves on occasion and tarnished plant bugs may spoil the fruit. But so far I've never had to spray or dust to get a good crop. In a dry summer such as the one we had last year, wild bees and hornets can be a nuisance. They'll suck or chew the berries for the moisture and sugar, particularly in late summer when



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there are fewer wildflowers to work. In a wet year, on the other hand, you can lose a lot of fruit to molds and rot diseases; also true with strawberries, but not so bad. There's a saying among farmers that a dry year will half scare you to death, but a wet one will starve you.

The raspberry variety I particularly like is August Red. Flavor and sweetness are superior, and the variety bears heavily. It's an ever-bearing type, meaning that it will fruit on established cane and at the same time put out new cane and fruit on that. But I treat it as a single-cropping type by cutting the cane down to about a foot in the fall.

New Hampshire Red and Fall Red are other good red types. Taylor is also widely planted. A new variety of considerable promise is Prestige. Brandywine is being promoted by some nursery companies, but is good, I think, only as a jam and jelly berry. For amber or yellow types, Fall Gold is well adapted and very sugary. Success is probably the best of the purples, but may be hard to find. Disease problems probably advise against black raspberries if you want to plant the reds. They don't go well together.

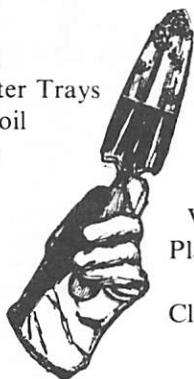
Since we're on cane-fruits, perhaps blackberries are the next logical subject, but they are by no means as suitable for growing in western Maine. The problem is simply one of hardiness. Most blackberry bushes will winter-kill most winters around here. This is of course not true in all sites; a grower having a sheltered piece of high ground with good air drainage may have luck, but hardiness is not the general rule.

This is not to say that blackberries don't or won't grow around here, because they do. But only after a fashion. The one planting I visited in Buckfield is probably typical. The cane had died back to snow line and of the hundred or so plants I looked at closely there were only three or four with viable fruit buds. In the case of these plants, the canes had tipped over under snow-weight and thus had been protected. This planting was quite old. Each year new cane came up from the crown, but this doesn't do much good since new cane doesn't carry fruit buds the first season (as is true of some raspberries). So some years this planting fruits some; other years not much at all. I guess a distinction should be made between true hardiness and sheer persistence.

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Having said all this, I must confess I have planted a few blackberries just to prove to myself what I already know. I guess you'd say Darrow is one of the best varieties. I've got something called Chandler which is not widely available and I've ordered some Lowden. Lowden is not highly regarded, but may have hardiness. The venture is not bright with promise. For once I've embarked on a farm project without fully expecting to coin a cool million the first year.

### Apples

Apples, of course, are the local cash crop. This is not to say that they're problem-free. True, most are hardy enough. But even with hardiness some care has to be shown. As for disease and insect problems, we have entered the big-time. Of all the major commercial crops, apples are probably at present the most heavily sprayed on a per-acre basis.

Selection of a suitable planting site handles some of the hardiness problems with apples. High ground with good air drainage is preferred. Even there, trees can be severely damaged by south-west winter injury. This occurs usually in spring when the bright sun warms the south-west face of the tree trunk. With sunset the trunk undergoes a rapid temperature drop which can kill plant tissue. The south side of the trunk should be painted white, or otherwise protected.

Of the apple varieties, Wealthy, which at one time was quite widely planted, is one of the hardiest. It's also one of the nicer tasting apples and stores fairly well. But it is no longer favored, probably because it's not as pretty as some and may tend to alternate-year fruiting. Anyone having high ground can, of course, plant the popular types—Mac and Golden Delicious. For storage and cooking quality combined, Northern Spy is excellent. Gravenstein is a fairly early, fine-flavored variety. Earliblaze looks good for very early.

For persons with low-land cold problems, perhaps the route to take is to plant Wealthy or one of the newer introductions out of Michigan or Minnesota that has been selected for cold tolerance. Once the tree is well-established, other varieties can be grafted in to see how they do.

But in all instances the grower must be

prepared to spray. The technique of integrated pest management, so termed, may help to reduce frequency and volume of spraying, but alternate so-called "organic" control methods have yet to be discovered. These remarks also apply to pears, peaches, apricots, plums, and grapes as well.

As for pears, peaches and so on, hardiness becomes the primary consideration, and a discussion of suitable varieties can accordingly be handled with good Yankee brevity.

### Pears

For pears, Bartlett and Clapp's Favorite are both popular. Magness makes a large, juicy fruit. As with many of the other fruit trees, it's best to plant several different varieties, to insure good pollination. Some people regard Bosc, a smaller-fruited variety, as special for taste.

### Peaches, Cherries, Etc.

With peaches, Reliance is the only answer. For apricots, Merricrest; it's being successfully grown on Paris Hill. Purple Heart Plum is quite hardy. The Stanley prune plum is locally raised. The one improved grape that should be generally hardy is Beta. It too is raised locally. Beta is too tart to be eaten out of hand, but combines well with sugar for juice and jelly.

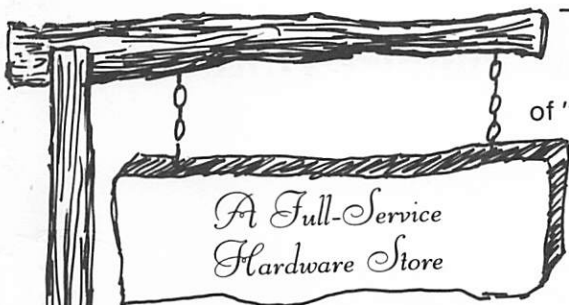
Cherries are border-line hardy in our region. One of the more hardy sweet types is Yellow Spanish, which is raised up on the hill above our farm. I'm sure it wouldn't succeed down here.

But, of course, birds are an almost intolerable problem unless the tree can be well netted. Some breeding work is presently being carried out with several of the bush cherry types and species. The bush type, of course, will greatly reduce netting problems.

### Blueberries

Birds are also a severe problem with the improved high-bush blueberry varieties. I grew up on a farm where we had a thousand or so high-bush blueberry plants under

Page 30...



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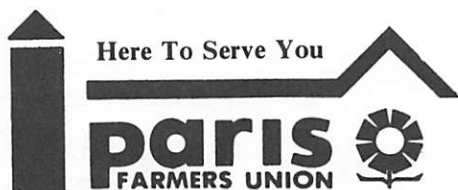
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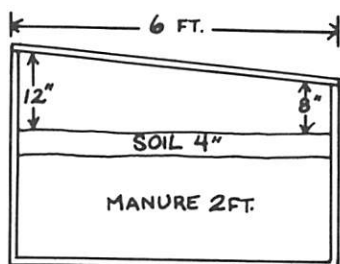
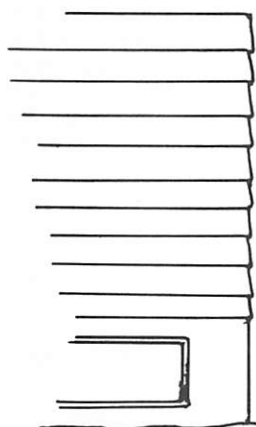
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# The Low-Cost Horse Manure Hotbed



SOUTH →

So the tomato seedlings you started are awfully leggy and take up too much room besides and you're thinking about next year building a small greenhouse, only you're not so sure you want to spend the money or encroach upon such little lawn as you have, and you're wondering generally what to do—move to Manhattan and forget it all? Take heart. Set yourself up with a horse manure hotbed.

I realize this may sound somewhat regressive. These days the talk and writing is heavy with solar greenhouses. Build a solar greenhouse and amaze your friends with radishes in December. It just won't work for me. Nothing amazes my friends. But anyway...

You're right. Solar greenhouse sounds like a redundancy. And what's new about them? After all, the earth, thanks to its blanket of air, is a solar greenhouse. And leaves are solar greenhouses. But horse manure

hotbeds? What are they?

A horse manure hotbed is a collapsible greenhouse heated by "fermenting" horse manure which one uses for six weeks or so in early spring and then folds up and stows away. A hotbed may be an excellent answer for gardeners intent upon starting their own seedlings for transplant without sinking a great deal of money into the project.

It can be simply described as a glassed-over box containing horse manure and enough additional space to accommodate some plants. (See diagram.)

To set one up, you do this: get a couple of storm windows, then build a frame that will hold them on a slight angle (to better catch the sun and to shed rain) and permit you to remove them for ventilation as well as getting at the plants for watering. Some of this is obvious.

The frames should be deep enough to hold

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two feet, and maybe a bit more, of manure. Then perhaps another 16 inches should be allowed for plant space. Or you can build walls of hay bales and set a more shallow frame on top. Or set a shallow frame on a hollowed-out heap of manure. Or dig a hole. But that will of course make problems with your lawn and Uncle Willy some night will go lumbering into it and stand there wallowing up to his hips in hybrid tomatoes.

Having come this far, then you fetch some horse manure. For some reason cow and hen manure and other close relatives don't seem to work as well, perhaps because different chemistries and micro-organisms are involved. Also, for some reason, an intermixing of hay or straw seems to help; sawdust and shavings being less admired.

If the manure is especially fresh, or spread out loosely, or dry it may need time and encouragement to start working (like my old John Deere G). It can be piled, tramped down, and doused with a bucket or two of water. Perhaps it should be forked over in a couple of days to mix it better. But if the manure is already working, or is hot, probably no encouragement is needed.

Where to get the manure if no local stable

is handy? I've gotten mine several times at the Lewiston Raceway, a bit of a jaunt but worth it. Or I guess. Once my loaded trailer came off the back of the car (shades of Uncle Willy). Several times at least I got stuck in the end of my driveway, it being mud-time.

But the race track manure has prizes, as with Cracker-Jacks. So far I've gotten three horseshoes (obviously I need one more), a burnt-out light bulb, and a tomato plant.

Yup, tomato plant. It came up in the manure and since it looked a lot stronger than the seedlings I'd started (my soil mix was poor), I kept it, planted it, saved seed, and have grown it every year since. I call it Buckfield Volunteer. Thought about naming it Lewiston Raceway, but that sounded too much like a gamble.

Working manure is thrown into the hotbed and levelled. I usually throw in five or six pails of water as well to encourage the composting process that generates the heat. On top of the levelled manure one then spreads several inches of garden soil.

In times past growers used to plant, or prick out, directly into this soil. I don't. I start all my plants in flats and set the flats on the warm soil. The soil provides a more level





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and stable support for the flats. But more importantly, it serves to absorb, or at least moderate the ammonia gases escaping from the manure.

The ammonia can be so strong for the first couple of days that it'll bring tears to the eyes. You stand there looking like a fool. And should you immediately put plants in the hotbed, you'll have real cause for tears. They'll probably be killed by "fire-fang," excessive heat and gases. I've lost leeks this way. They are not at all tolerant of fresh manure.

The hotbed you have of course pointed more or less south. If you can, it's best set up in the lee of a building to cut the spring winds. The sun beats in, the glass holds the sun's warmth, the manure composts, and we're cooking. I put in a thermometer. I've seen it up to 120°F. So one opens the glass—it ventilates, lets the gases dissipate. And then, in a couple of days, the plants can go in.

I start my hotbed on May 1. That's about the time I'm ready to prick out my small tomato and pepper plants into flats. Shortly after, I plant cuke and melon seeds into flats and put these in the hotbed also. All of these (peppers excepted) will go out into the

garden around June 5. And through all of May the horse manure should provide all the heat I need to keep the plants warm when the sun isn't.

I cover the glass at night with a canvas to help hold heat. But cold isn't the danger that heat is. One has to keep an eye on the bed, or it'll get far too warm. On days when I have to be away, I open the glass part-way before I leave.

I figure the hotbed frame cost me about \$20 for materials. I price the manure at \$3. For transportation. My labor of course comes free. But the beauty of the arrangement is having the manure for other uses after the hotbed is struck down. I fill a couple of heavy, clear plastic bags with the soil and manure, tie them tightly, throw them in a spot where the sun beats in, and leave them there until next spring. By then the contents are thoroughly composted and perfect as an ingredient in soil mix for starting plants to put in the horse manure hotbed. All very tidy.

□

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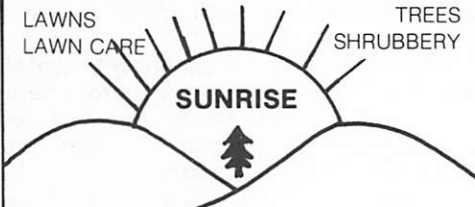
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cultivation. It was my duty to get up at dawn to go sit on a box out in the blueberry field to shoot or at least drive off the starlings. Being young, I'd have been out half the night on the prong, and the shot-gun business was not well-regarded.

High-bush blueberries are in many ways a very attractive crop for the small gardener. There are disease and insect problems but they can be managed without great effort. But the question of hardiness (of which this writer is tiring) again must be raised.

Roughly speaking, high-bush blueberries will stand twenty below and probably not much more. But this assertion has to be qualified because lowest-winter-temperature is not the sole factor that relates to hardiness. Several warm days, for instance, that are followed by a quick drop to five below can do far greater damage than a twenty-below that comes on gradually. Long spells of bright sun combining with wind and cold can be particularly killing.

Having frightened off, or at least chilled, all but the hardy gardeners, what's good for high-bush varieties? Earliblue, Blue-ray, Bluecrop and Jersey seem best for our region. I have listed them in order of ripening, Earliblue being earliest and so on; and by planting some of each, the growing season is accordingly spread out. There's also a nice range of flavors in these four.

Anyone who contemplates blueberry growing must take the soil acidity into account, since blueberries are far more particular than the other fruits we've discussed. Soil pH should test around 5.0. If the soil runs much "sweeter," plants will simply stand still or, worse yet, give up and

die. Chemical applications can increase soil acidity, but they can be expensive on any sizeable scale, and tricky as a result. Better to plant on old, run-down ground that's naturally acid.

Highbush cultivated blueberries are raised in South Paris in one planting that I know of. The location may be chilly and subject to late frosts. Last winter all of the plants winter-killed badly and provided practically no crop. But the variety-types are not known to the present owners of the planting, which makes assessment difficult. The varieties, for example, may be some of the older ones that are poorly adapted to northern New England. Birds, as with all fruit, are a particular nuisance.

When you consider all the lovely fruit of all the various types that do well south of here, but have a struggle in the rigors of our climate, don't you sometimes wonder? But think of the taxes in Massachusetts and the boom-crowding in southern New Hampshire.

Besides, breeding-work and experimentation have done much and promise more. We just have to show a bit more consideration in what we attempt, plus the usual old tenacity that brought and kept people and gardening here to start—the Indians, then us.

□

*Meador was raised on a fruit and vegetable farm in New Hampshire. He now farms with his wife Pat in Buckfield. His column, "Thinking About Country Things" will become a regular magazine feature beginning next month.*



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# You don't say

## BEWARE OF THE CANTCAW

Out of the wilds of Streaked Mountain comes the tale of a poacher who, while stalking short trout in a closed brook, met up with one of the meanest, fiercest flying creatures known in these parts. It's called a cantcaw and it will attack anyone who dares penetrate its domain. The goggle-eyed winged beast boasts a great hooked beak, knife-like fangs and a violent temper to boot. But the varmint can't caw. It doesn't even hoot or howl. It just mumbles when it's mad.

That's what the excited poacher told wardens as they confiscated his gunny sack full of short trout. The wily bushranger turned out to be a well known expert with the graden hackle by the name of Uriah Dipley, whose skill in the field of poaching is matched only by T. Hadsworth Spidmoot and T. Mireson Deekploom.

Uriah Didley explained to the wardens how he stealthily crept around a bend in the brook and quietly dropped a nightcrawler into a deep hole. All of a sudden there was a powerful jerk on his line and Uriah yanked for all he was worth. He got one and "Twas a whopper," he said. Then, just as he was about to remove his prize catch from the hook he heard a rustling behind him and a mumbling sound somewhat like a tippler who has consumed a mite too much fire water.

Uriah says he wheeled around in his poaching sneakers and came face to beak with the winged demon of the woods, a cantcaw. He stood stunned in his tracks. His poaching sneakers just wouldn't move. Finally he let out a whoop that could be heard clear to Buckfield. The cantcaw waited no longer. It snatched the fishpole out of Uriah's hands and flew off mumbling to itself with the big redspot dangling on the end of the line. Uriah grabbed the gunnysack full of short trout and put for home lickety-larrup.

Uriah Dipley's yell had alerted the wardens and they met him when he emerged from the woods, gunnysack in hand, and that's when Uriah told them of his frightening encounter with the cantcaw.



The wardens listened attentively, then told Uriah another tale of woe and led him off to visit a poaching-hating judge.

According to T. Morton Fingerdung, a bird watcher of note, the cantcaw not only experiences difficulty being heard or understood, it has trouble finding a mate. When one meets up with another, male or female, each one takes off like Hogan's goat. Who would want to whisper sweet nothings to a critter such as that? "Not I," says I—and neither would another cantcaw.

□

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# Recollections

## Volunteers of the Ground Observer Corps

*by Otta Louise Chase*

It is a winter night, so clear that the stars seem to be within reach. One can almost hear them crackling. The moonlight on the snow illuminates the vast panorama visible from the hilltop. Inside a crude small shelter, a roaring wood stove combats the bitter cold. Blackout curtains are seldom drawn and the occupant usually sits in darkness peering through the window, watching and listening until eyes and ears ache. At the first faint hum of an approaching plane, the Observer is outside locating the direction of the flight. In the daylight there is a swift attempt to identify the aircraft. This information is then immediately telephoned to headquarters in Portland.

Day after day, night after night, through all seasons, this lonely post and many others like it, is staffed by volunteers of the Ground Observer Corps of the Army Air Force. World War II has begun and people from all walks of life and of all ages are eager to become part of the war effort. This is simply an account of one town, but I know it could apply to many other towns in this area.

Most of the pertinent records have been lost and I may inadvertently omit some name or date. If so, I apologize. During the year of 1942 the Waterford Ground Observer Corps came into being with Ralph Knight as Chief Observer and Gladys, his wife, as his assistant. They soon set up a workable schedule. The Observation Post on Rice's Hill was in operation around the clock.

The Army Air Force then decided that further instruction was necessary and on Sunday, March 15, 1943, I left Norway by bus to attend a week's schooling in Portland on Aircraft Recognition. I shared a room in the old Lafayette Hotel on Congress Street with Leita Winslow of North Berwick. We

attended school in the Jewish Community Center on Cumberland Avenue. S/Sgt. Joseph M. Curran was the instructor. I graduated from this school along with 41 others from eastern New Hampshire and western Maine on March 21st.

On Tuesday, April 6th at 7:30 p.m. an Aircraft Recognition Course was started at the Wilkins House in Waterford Flat. "Bill" Vinton, who later became District Supervisor, was kind enough to bring his projector and assist. Later on, Mr. Vinton conducted a similar course in East Stoneham, assisted by me; and I taught one in Sweden by myself.

Silhouettes of various aircraft, both friendly and enemy, were flashed onto the screen. I pointed out the identifying features and the class would recite them after me in cadence, over and over again. Thirty-nine signed up for the school and twenty-nine completed it. Various examinations were given and four members received a perfect score for every one. They were Stephen Fillebrown, Reginald Kimball, Henry Lord, and Christine Rugg. The following members got grades of 90 or above: Albert Bradford, Lillian Rogers, Irene Bean, Donald Chase, Happy Hamlin, Walter Hamlin, Blanche Tyler, Marion Hamlin, Chester Holt, Ralph Gardner, Walter Brown, Henry Kittredge, Margaret Rogers, Marshall Rolfe, Ralph Knight, Gladys Knight, Ella Lord, Stanhope Mason, and Evelyn Rogers.

A ceremony patterned after High School Graduation Exercises was held on Wednesday, June 2nd, at the Wilkins House with the public invited. Air Force Sgt. Fallon, assisted by PFC Wolfe came from Portland to take part.

After a period of time the Observation

Post on Rice's Hill was moved to the main road between the Flat and North Waterford for convenience. Observers usually worked in pairs and many long and tiresome hours were spent there. Perhaps in the "big picture" the Waterford Ground Observers did not make a *spectacular* contribution to the total war effort, but certainly much credit must be given to those earnest workers who gave so generously of their time and effort for the defence of their country.

Today the speed of modern aircraft would render this operation worthless. It could not hope to rival the efficient radar screens now in use. However, I am sure if some crisis was to make such a volunteer group necessary again, many of those same people or their children or grandchildren would be found "manning the Post."

□

*Otta Louise Chase is a poet and writer, among other talents, and serves as town clerk of Sweden.*



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## BRAINTEASER XIII

A hunter decided to go hunting on the spur of the moment. He was out of ammunition, so he borrowed eight cartridges from a friend. He was told, however, that one cartridge had no powder. The hunter tried to identify the defective shell by weighing one against the other in his hands—but without success. He decided to use a prospector's balance to solve his problem. The balance was a simple one, consisting of pans hung from a beam centered on a pivot.

The hunter wanted to spot the blank cartridge as quickly as possible. He devised a method for solving the problem and found the dud in two weighings. How did he do it?

### ANSWER TO BRAINTEASER XII

From the information given to him by the Russian, the traveler was able to put together the following diagram:

The triangle formed by Umsk, Munsk, and Monsk, and the triangle formed by Omsk, Monsk, and Minsk are right triangles. Application of the Pythagorean theorem then shows that the distance from Omsk to Minsk and the distance from Umsk to Munsk is 10 kilometers in each case.

Winners were:

Don Carrier of Poland was winner of Brain-teaser XII. Others who had forwarded correct answers at press time were Shirley Hodson and Rupert Grover, Fryeburg; Tony Whitman, Norway; Ken Morse, Waterford; Dave and Betty Harriman, Auburn; John Applin, West Bethel; Steve and Sandra Roderick, Mechanic Falls; John Knox, Buckfield.

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# Homemade

## LEMON FOR APRIL: REFRESHING AS SPRING

by Lucretia Douglas



Along about the last of March I get tired of apple, mince, pumpkin and custard pie. I start thinking of a nice tart pie—refreshing as spring—lemon. There are three kinds of lemon pie that are hard to choose between.

The old stand-by lemon meringue, and then lemon chiffon and lemon sponge. Also there's lemon cheesecake that requires no baking and is very easy to make. Any kind of pie is expensive nowadays, but once in a while an economical meal can be made special with a pie for dessert.

### PASTRY FOR A ONE-PIE SHELL

*This pastry can be used for either lemon meringue or lemon sponge pie. Use ten-inch plate for meringue pie, nine-inch for sponge pie. Lemon chiffon needs ten-inch pie plate with either of the following crusts:*

Sift together into bowl:

1½ cups flour                      ½ tsp. salt

Blend in until texture of coarse sand:

1/3 cup Crisco

Flake an additional heaping Tbsp. Crisco into the flour, leaving it in coarse flakes. Using a fork, sprinkle a little ice water on flour, stirring gently with fork until you can gather into a ball. Roll out on floured board to fit your pie plate. Flute edges as filling will be deep.

Bake in a very hot 425°F oven until lightly browned—for meringue or chiffon pie. Leave unbaked for sponge pie.

### NO-BAKE GRAHAM CRACKER CRUST

*Lemon chiffon pie or lemon cheesecake can be made with no-bake graham cracker crust. You can get three pie shells from one box of graham crackers.*

Put a piece of waxed paper on your pastry board and crush the crackers with your

rolling pin a few at a time. Then pick up paper with crumbs on it and empty in bowl. Add a stick of oleo and 1/3 cup sugar. Work sugar and oleo into cracker crumbs until they are well-blended, using your fingers. Then pat mixture into pie plate, reserving ¼ cup crumbs for topping for cheesecake. For lemon chiffon pie you may use a little grated lemon rind on top.

### LEMON CHEESECAKE

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese

2 cups cold milk

1 pkg. Instant Lemon Pudding

Break cream cheese into small pieces in bowl of your mixer. Add milk a tiny bit at a time, beating on low speed until whole two cups is mixed with cheese. Then pour pudding mix into cheese mixture, blending well on medium high speed for a minute. Pour into prepared graham cracker crust. Top with whipped topping or whipped cream and sprinkle with reserved crumbs. Chill for several hours before serving.

### LEMON MERINGUE PIE

Separate four eggs, reserving whites. Mix four egg yolks in a bowl, beating until light colored.

Add:

½ tsp. salt

2 Tbsp. cornstarch

1½ cups sugar

½ cup flour

(to make paste)

Put on to boil in top of double boiler:

2¼ cups boiling water

1 lg. Tbsp. butter or oleo

1 tsp. grated lemon rind

(Do not do this first, as too much water will boil away while you mix other ingredients.)

Stir paste mix into water mix and cook over boiling water in double boiler, stirring occasionally, until mixture gets thick and clear—about twenty minutes. Remove from heat and stir in six Tbsp. lemon juice. Blend well and pour into pre-cooked pie shell.

Make meringue of four egg whites,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, pinch of salt. Beat until stiff and glossy. Spread over filling in pie shell, being sure to cover up to the edges of the crust. Brown in a 350° oven for about fifteen minutes until golden colored. Cool before serving.

### LEMON SPONGE PIE

*The difference in the sponge pie is that the meringue is baked in the filling—a little easier to make and very good.*

Cream:

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup soft butter  
or oleo                      3 Tbsp. flour  
1 cup sugar

Beat in the yolks of three eggs. Add six Tbsp. lemon juice, one tsp. grated lemon rind.

In clean bowl beat three egg whites until stiff. Stir two cups cold milk into lemon mixture, then fold in beaten egg whites. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake in hot oven (425°F) for fifteen minutes, then reduce heat to 325°F and bake thirty minutes longer.

### LEMON CHIFFON PIE

*Lemon chiffon is the lightest of pies, just right after a heavy meal. Also can be made a day ahead.*

Dissolve one envelope plain gelatine in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cold water. Combine in top of double boiler:

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar                       $\frac{1}{2}$  cup lemon juice  
4 beaten egg yolks              1 tsp. grated  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt                          lemon rind

Add dissolved gelatine and cook until thickened, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Beat four egg whites with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar into stiff meringue. Fold lemon mixture into beaten egg whites and pour into pastry-lined pie plate. Top with whipped cream or whipped topping and sprinkle with grated lemon rind or shaved chocolate.




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...Page 10

will also try to make Maine and its people out as being a little quaint. I do not know why we do this, unless it is because we are proud of being a little different.

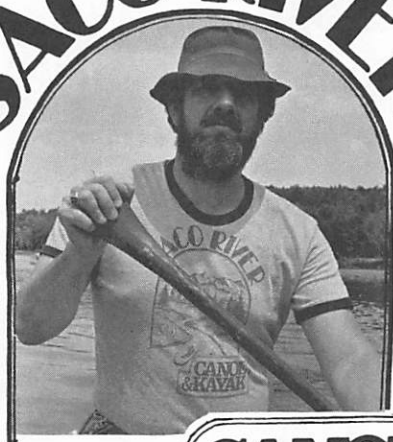
Dad enjoys telling the story about the old man who had indulged too strongly in his home-made moonshine. He was preparing for a trip to town when a neighbor happened along and noticed that he had his horse hitched to the wagon with his head where the rear should be. He called his friend's attention to his error, and with solemn dignity the high-feeling gentleman answered, "I guess, my friend, you don't know which way I am going!"

Another favorite is one which was told him by a summer guest, but Dad has trimmed it up and tells it as his own. The middle-aged lady was telling her doctor all her many ills, but the doctor could not seem to diagnose her trouble. "Do you smoke?" he asked. "Certainly not," snapped the lady. "I suppose you never indulge in liquor either," said the doctor, and the reply was a scornful negative. "Do you drink coffee?" he asked as his last resort. "No, don't care for it," was the



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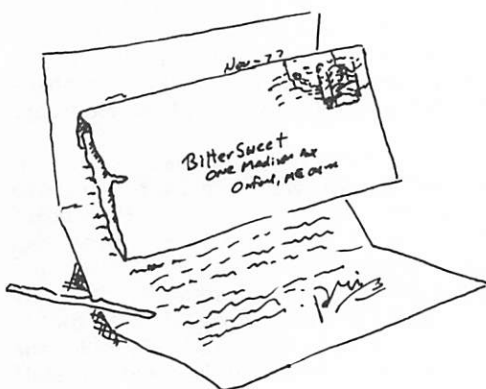
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# Ayah

We consider your comments and suggestions an important means of discovering our readers' interests. Representative and appropriate letters will be published as space allows. Most likely answers won't be necessary, and probably the only response you'll receive will be a most appropriate "Ayah!"



## A HAPPY CHORD

Dr. Michael A. Lacombe's article in the February Issue struck a happy chord in the symphony that is my life here in Maine. I sincerely hope it did the same for all who read it. If they were not humanistically inclined before reading it, they might be now.

As a person who has been involved in psycho-social interaction and marital and family therapy for about three decades, I deeply appreciated his accurate empathy, genuineness and warmth. The power of love for fellow man that can and must be tapped in every community of human beings was beautifully portrayed. It really is the only way we are going to survive as a race of Man in what sometimes appears to be a Planet gone mad!

Congratulations to you, **BitterSweet**, for the perceptive acceptance of his wise words which were printed for all of us to enjoy and to ponder.

Anthony R. Stone, Ph.D.  
Locke Mills

answer. The doctor sat in silence until the lady suddenly had an inspiration. "Doctor," she said helpfully, "I do say damn once in a while!"

Dad has a story about summer guests that they all enjoy and ask him to tell each newcomer. A minister was out fishing on our lake and a lady was nearby trying her luck at the sport. She was, however, hidden from the minister by a bend in the lake. The preacher was about to land an unusually large bass when, as in many fish stories, it escaped and fell back into the water. The minister of the Gospel forgot his teachings and like any human looked at the rippling water and said "Damn!" in a loud voice. "So I say!" replied the lady, and came out of hiding to console the minister in his great loss.

Dad can enjoy a story about himself as well as the other fellow and tells of the time he promised to build a barn door for a man, but kept putting off the job until a year had passed. Finally the new door was finished, but the owner made no mention of paying Dad for his labor. Six months went by and

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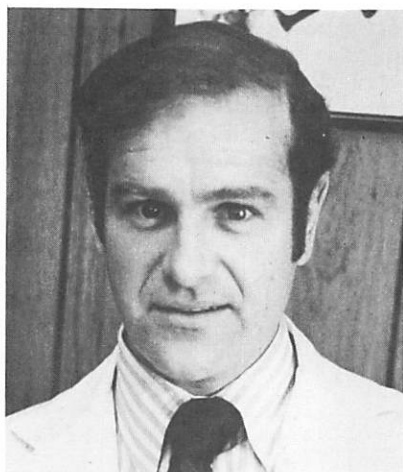
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# Medicine For The Hills



by Michael A. Lacombe, M.D.



## NUMBER ONE

*Government inspectors scrutinize American hospitals every year. Every other year doctors, nurses, and administrators from the federal government inspect the nation's hospitals and accredit them if they are deserving. On alternate years a team from Augusta similarly reviews Maine's hospitals. All fifty-three of the state's hospitals, including Maine Medical Center and Eastern Maine Medical Center, are so inspected. For our hospital, Stephens Memorial, the inspection has just been completed and the results are in. This is a report of that inspection.*

We, the doctors, nurses, lab technicians, administrators, trustees, were all jammed into the conference room. Members of the state inspection team sat at the far end of the table and seemed to be self-conscious. We, who although we do our share of petty griping and grouching-about, are nevertheless proud of our hospital, wondered what the inspectors thought of us and of our job. The phrases fell to us in pieces, much as they do when one's mind is racing ahead to the anticipated reservation. The words came to us:

"...you seem so willing to correct minor

problems, never have any major ones...the physical plant is simply beautiful, maintenance is doing a superb job...lovely hospital, cheerful, a place to be proud of...we want to take samples of your committee work and medical records to other hospitals as examples of fine work...nursing service excellent...errors found and followed up on quickly...no repetition of mistakes...your patients are obviously well-cared for...in summary, ladies and gentlemen, we feel that your hospital is the best in the state."

Someone who should know had just said it! And we felt a collective pride, in each other, and in our hospital. Stephens Memorial Hospital. Number One. How does it happen?

There are fine people on the hospital staff, devoted people whom we are fortunate to have. But, thanking a committed board of trustees for its involvement, an administrator for his availability and responsiveness, a community for its financial help, or a hospital staff for its honest and hard work is not really telling the whole story. All hospitals have devoted staff members; many have committed administrators; and some even have concerned, honest, unbiased trustees. But not every hospital is Number One. It is not sufficient for you to know simply that we are the best in the state—you must know why.

Inspecting a hospital requires close examination of medical records. Such an examination can reveal a great deal. In the record are the doctor's admitting physical examination of the patient and his summary of the patient's history. Daily progress notes dictated by the doctor are included in the record, as are all of the doctor's orders. All lab tests and x-ray reports are there. Nurses from each of the three shifts write daily notes on each patient and include them in the record. Consultations from other doctors, reports of surgery, lists of medications, daily logs of blood pressure, pulse, temperature, urine output are all there. For patients covered by insurance, which means most everyone, these items must by law be there. Slip-ups, cover-ups, and omissions are obvious to the trained observer. Poor medical care is reflected in excessive or inappropriate laboratory testing, incomplete physical examinations, abnormalities not pursued, infrequent doctor's visits, inappropriate surgery, or perhaps just a general vagueness about the record.

Every hospital must also, by law, have certain working committees comprised of doctors on the staff, the nurses and other paramedical personnel, and the hospital administration. These committees review and report on the following: the appropriateness of hospitalization (does the patient really need to be there?), and of laboratory and x-ray testing, antibiotic use and blood transfusions, a review of the treatment of certain pre-selected diseases, a review of drug use and medication errors, a check on early in-hospital infectious epidemics, the functioning of the Intensive Care Unit, a review of the continuing medical education of the hospital staff, a continuing review of the hospital by-laws, and the appropriateness of surgery by examining tissues obtained at surgery. Another committee plans for the future needs of the hospital with regard to staffing and equipment. All of this committee work is open to the scrutiny of the inspectors. Honest work is obvious; so is any rubber-stamping.

The inspection team looks at a hospital's regularly scheduled meetings and attendance at them. Stephens Memorial Hospital has a *monthly* meeting of doctors and administration—by law, these meetings are required only three or four times per year. There is a monthly review of all deaths, and when possible, autopsy information is correlated with premortem diagnoses. A hospital's autopsy rate is important to the inspecting team—it reflects the staff's willingness to learn. There is a monthly x-ray teaching conference at Stephens, a weekly x-ray quiz for the doctors, bimonthly medical education sessions, and teaching conferences for the nursing staff. Our hospital even has a department for community education.

Other areas are scrutinized as well: hospital charges, the workings of the business office, the "books," the care of emergency room patients and of outpatients, and the dietary, maintenance and housekeeping departments.


How does it all come together? Is there a common denominator permitting Stephens Memorial Hospital to be the best in the State? I believe that there is. At Stephens Memorial Hospital no one is above reproach, and no one expects to be. This prevailing attitude, together with an able administrator, a committed board of trustees, and a dedicated

nursing staff generates quite a successful operation. Where there are no sacred cows, constructive criticism is possible and, in the case of hospitals, promotes excellence of care. Our system of checks and balances and our willingness to accept criticism and correct mistakes means good medicine.

A closing comment: all this is not just self-aggrandizement. Stephens Memorial Hospital is Number One. Those who work there know that it should be. Starting from that fact, what follows? That small is not less, rural not inferior, local not second-rate. You have the best hospital in the state, and you should be proud of that and confident in the care it delivers. I only wish there were some way to tell this to the summer tourist who enters our emergency room with fear in his eyes.

*Dr. Lacombe is a member of the Stephens Memorial Hospital Health Education Project Advisory Board and Oxford Hills Internal Medicine Group.*

□




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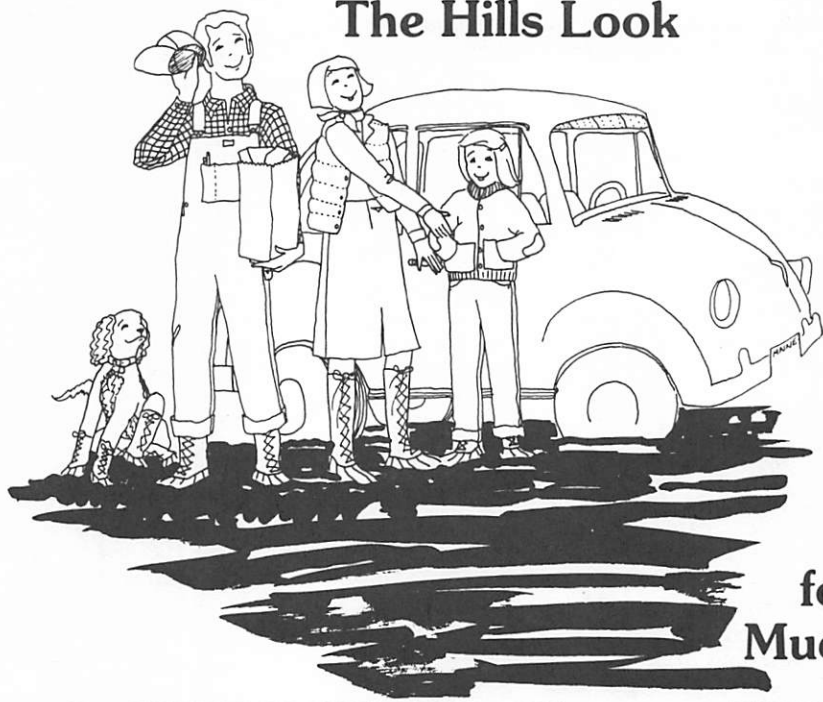
  

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## The Hills Look



for April's  
Mud Season

...Page 37

one day the man called Dad and asked, "How long ago was it that you made my barn door?" Dad told him about six months and the man replied, "Yes, I thought it was," and slapping the old horse with the reins he said, "Get up, Maggie," and drove off. Another six months went by and he called again. "Elmer," he said, "when you finished my barn door I had the money in my pocket to pay you, but I decided to make you wait as long for your pay as I did to get you to do the job. Here is your money and let this be a lesson to you."

Dad could see the funny side of this, for he knows his habit of promising to do any and all jobs that come along regardless of lack of time or how they interfere with one another. It seems a long way from April to summer guests, but I believe Dad puts in the time thinking up new stories to entertain them. Out-of-state visitors who meet him may think of him as a mountaineer from Maine, but he is an expert carpenter and can read blueprints as well as the next one. The dam at the outlet of Keewaydin Lake was built under his direction and we are proud of the fact that it was voted in town meeting to

name the dam in his honor. Not a big accomplishment like Boulder Dam nor an honor that will ever give him world fame, still on new maps of Maine, the name of another McAllister will be added to join the parade of names who have done their tiny bit toward building a town and a state. A nation is only as strong as its states and a state builds its background from small towns and men like Dad who get their strength from the soil, from labor with their hands, and from long years of faithful service in small things.

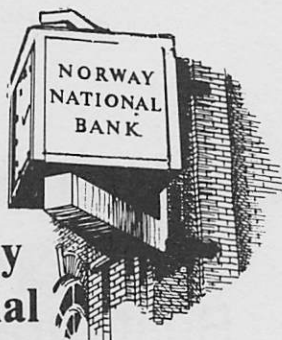
There are still long days to go after Dad's birthday before April gives way to May and its springlike days. April will start the morning with a smiling face and the promise of a beautiful day but by noon she is crying on the window panes, a cold wind is blowing, and all her promises are forgotten. □

(continued next month)

*Inez Farrington, a native of East Stoneham, now resides at the Ledgeview Nursing Home in West Paris. In addition to her book, **Maine Is Forever**, from which the article above is reprinted, Mrs. Farrington has written material for **Redbook** and **The Ford Times** as well as several books of poetry.*



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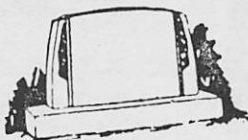


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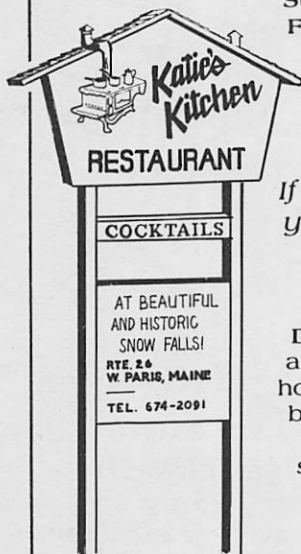
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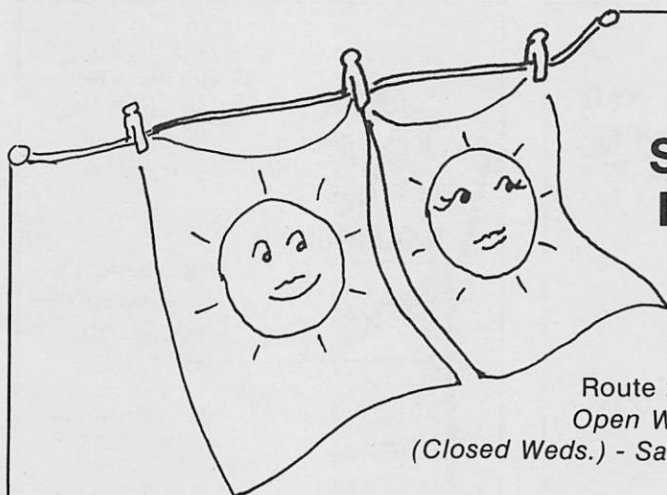
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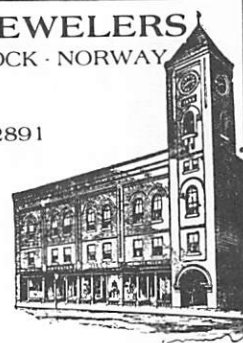
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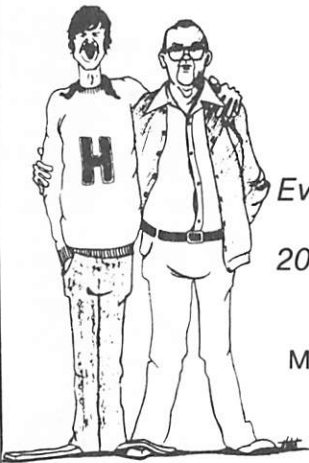
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# Jay's Journal



by Jay Burns



In Greek mythology it is said that Demeter, the Goddess of the Corn, controls the growth of all vegetation. When her daughter, Persephone, was seduced by the lord of the underworld, the earth became barren of all vegetation because Demeter was unhappy. When Persephone returned, Demeter celebrated by making the earth green and productive once again. However, Persephone is forced to return to her underworld hubby four months of the year.

Demeter becomes unhappy during this time and no vegetation appears on the earth. This is how the Greeks explained winter.

In Maine it must seem as though Persephone is in no hurry to get back to her mother. She hangs out in the underworld for around six months at a time, much to our disappointment.

The transition from winter to true spring is agonizingly slow in this area. While other areas of the country start celebrating the warmth of spring around the twenty-first of March, we in the Hills and Lakes Region are still huddled about our wood stoves, cursing ourselves for not hauling enough wood the fall before.

In Maine the end of March and the beginning of April is often the most interesting time period for weather watchers. Cold and snowstorms still appear in the region, but hot, summer-like weather is not a rarity.

Before we go into depth on the freakish activities of early spring, let's take a look at the weather of the past.

The Cold War of mid-February will long be remembered, not only for its extreme cold, but for its duration—ten days.

The mercury dipped to minus fourteen outside and to plus twenty in my bedroom. During the day it rose to a maximum of fourteen above outside, but catapulted itself to a balmy thirty-three degrees in my sauna-like bedroom. Such are the luxuries of living in the country.

March, the maple sugaring month, began on a good note for maple-sugarers. The temperatures rose to the 40's during the day and fell into the 20's at night. This extreme in temperature is needed because the maple tree acts much like a pump when it is delivering sap. The cold air contracts the tree and the sap, so to speak, and the warm daytime temperatures expels the sap by warming it and making it move inside the tree. An extreme of either temperature results in a disappearance of the sap flow.

As of March 15th our family had made about a gallon of syrup. We put in nineteen taps this year. Most of the sap for the first batch of syrup came during the first several days of the run when we collected forty gallons of sap. The ratio of sap to syrup is forty gallons of sap for one gallon of maple syrup. A lot of collecting, straining, boiling, and wood goes into a precious few pints of maple syrup.

The middle of March was very warm. A very slow weather pattern had developed. A low is counter-clockwise and the circulation around a high pressure system is clockwise. The resulting air flow around these two systems pumped warm, moist, tropical air over the region. As the warm air hit the cooler air and snow over Maine, fog and light rain resulted. At our house, nine tropical air over the region. As the warm air hit the cooler air and snow over Maine, fog and light rain resulted. At our house, nine inches of snow was lost in two days. So much for progress, as twenty-one inches remained.

The middle of the month brought back

more seasonable temperatures as a storm moved off the coast, intensified, and circulated cold air over the hills and lakes.

We are still searching for the crowning storm, the last of the season. The crown storm that most sticks in my mind is the April snowstorm of 1975. From April third to the sixth 20.5 inches of heavy snow fell. The varsity baseball team of Oxford Hills High School in South Paris was practicing on clear, dry ground before the storm. Says coach Hank Burns, "We had infield practice on the front lawn of the school the day before. It was sunny and warm and the guys were talking about practicing outdoors and getting a jump on the season. It snowed a couple of feet that night and we spent two weeks in the gym practicing bunts."

Fickle weather and schoolboy baseball are synonymous in the area. A few days of warm weather and ballplayers pile out onto any clear stretch of lawn, only to be blasted indoors by the returning Old Man Winter.

Even when we can get outdoors it's not so hot. I can remember playing a game in Augusta while the wind was blowing from the northwest at 20 to 30 mph. Light snow obscured the vision of our long-johned outfielders. The temperature hovered around forty degrees.

However, spring in Maine is not all cold and snow. There *have* been reports of spring during the spring. In 1976, from April 16th to the 18th, a high pressure system became entrenched over Bermuda. The flow from around this high sent temperatures into the 80's. Concord reported a high of 90 degrees. We recorded a maximum of eighty-six degrees. The Oxford Hills varsity baseball team played a doubleheader in Augusta that day, and the players complained that it was much too hot to play any baseball. That was in April, remember.

The early spring is also noted for its floods. Floods will occur when a large snowpack remains into early spring. A long and heavy rainfall, coupled with high temperatures will make the snowpack disappear at an alarming rate. This occurred with the floods of 1977.

It was March. Rain commenced in the early afternoon. At one in the morning it was raining heavily. Returning from Norway, I recalled that all seemed normal. It was raining heavily, yes, but all the streams were within their banks and no flooding had occurred.

Somewhere between one and six that

morning a type of flash flooding happened. In our weather log we have a note saying that our neighbor down the road, David Millett, reported hearing stones being carried down the road by a stream that had overflowed its banks beyond his house. School was cancelled two days because of flooded roads. Our own road had been completely washed away by a "river" that doesn't exist nine months out of the year.

Spring is also noted for an event that inspires even those most weary of winter. I'm talking about our own local ice-out contests. The most popular contest is the one sponsored by Woodman's Sporting Goods Store in Norway, Maine. Hundreds of people take guesses on when Pennesssee-wassee Lake will become free of ice. Here in Waterford last year Keoka Lake didn't become free of ice until May third. Usually ice-out occurs from the middle of April to the end of the month for Keoka and later for lakes of larger size. So, to kill some time while you're waiting for spring, organize an ice-out contest on a local lake. Or enter one. We all know how predictable the spring weather in Maine is. □

*Burns, a sophomore at Oxford Hills High School, is a resident of Waterford, where he serves as a weather observer for WCSH-TV.*



*Ayah, mud season's here again Paw.*





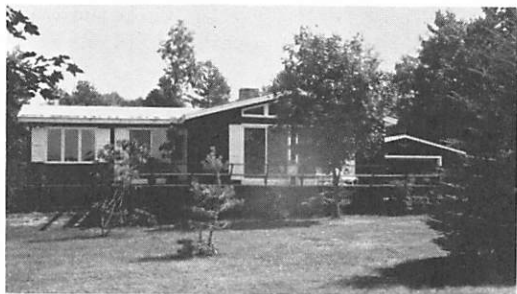
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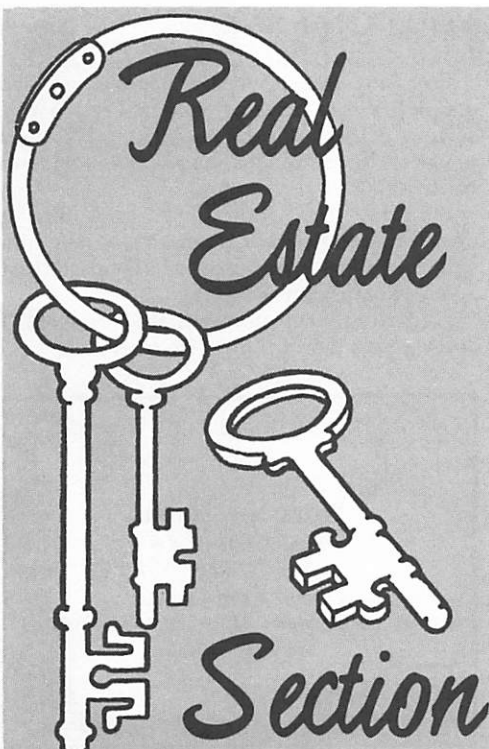
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Fred thought a moment, then replied, "I don't give a damn. I'm in no hurry."



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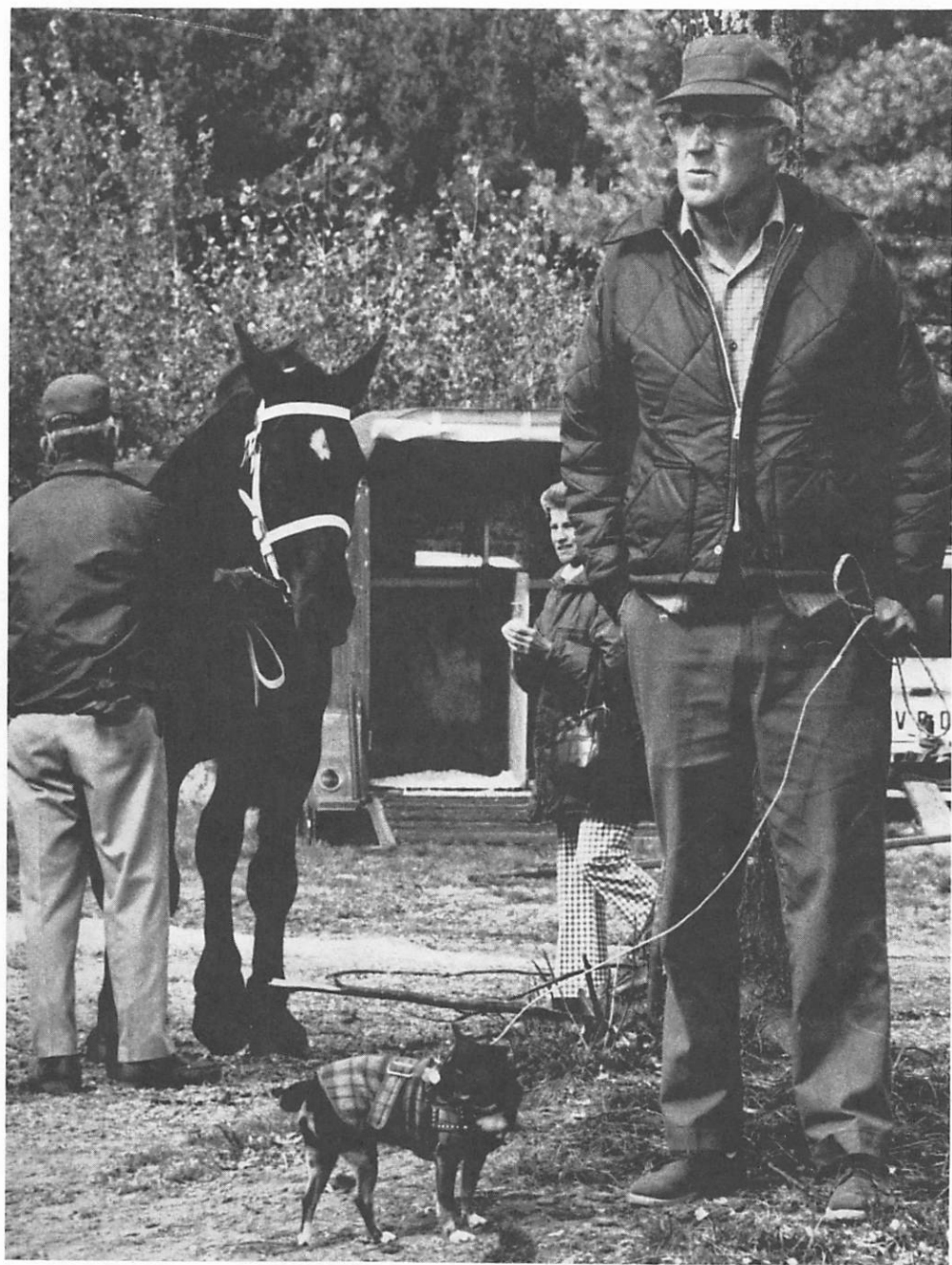


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